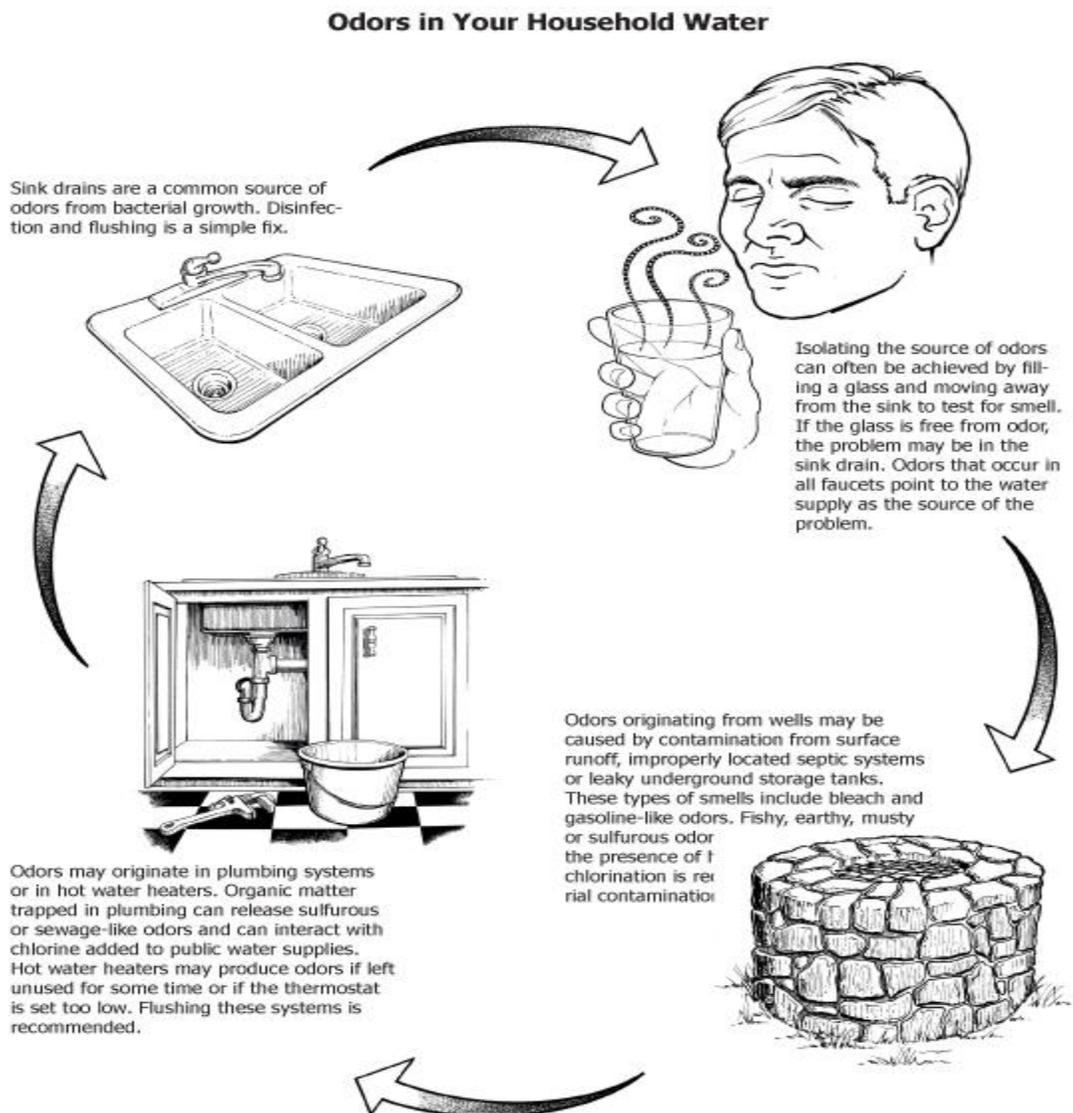
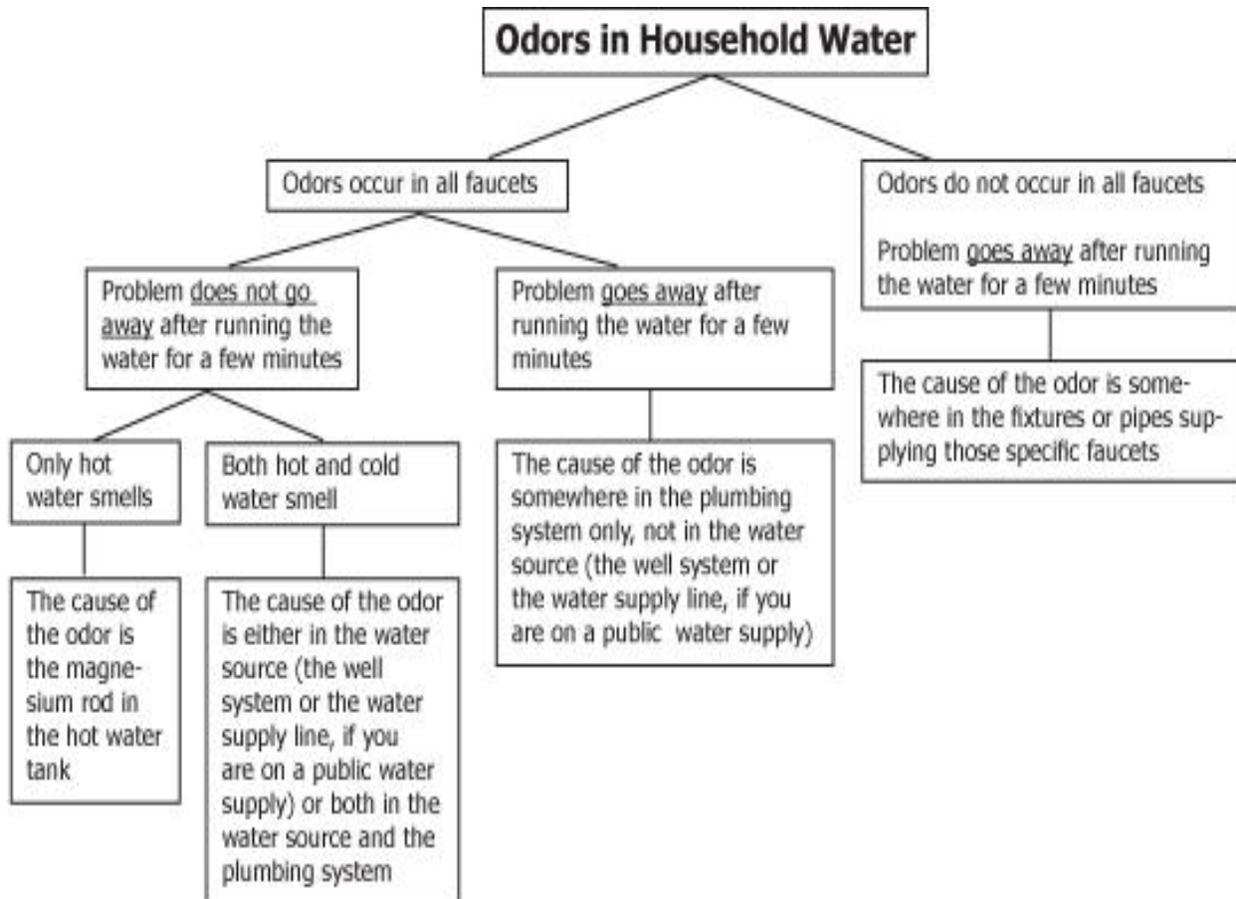


Homeowners sometimes experience unpleasant odors in their household water. In many cases, the exact cause of the odor is difficult to determine by water testing; however, here are a few general recommendations for treating some common causes of household water odors.

### Locating the Source of the Odor

If odor occurs in all water faucets, the problem is probably in the main water supply. If it occurs only in certain faucets, the problem is likely in the fixtures or pipes supplying those specific faucets. If the problem goes away after running the water for a few minutes, the problem is somewhere in the household plumbing system. If the odor is persistent, the problem could be the water source or a combination of both the water source and the plumbing system





For odors coming from the plumbing system corrective measures are suggested. If you suspect that the odor is coming from the water, contact the office at [\(760\) 247-7330](tel:7602477330). This is especially true if your neighbors also experience the same type of odor problem.

**Drinking Water: Common odor problems, probable causes and suggested corrective measures**

If you have a particular odor problem in your household water and its cause are not included in this list, discuss the problem with Daniel Smith or Gail Hunter in our office at 9429 Cerra Vista St. Apple Valley, Ca 92308 [\(760\)247-7330](tel:7602477330).

**a. Bleach, Chemical or Medicinal Odor**

Sometimes we add chlorine to our storage tanks to prevent bacterial growth. Typical levels of free chlorine in drinking water from PWS are 0.2 – 1.5 parts per million (ppm), though levels can be as high as 4.0 ppm. Odors resulting from a chlorine addition usually go away if the water is exposed to air for several minutes.

Adding chlorine to the water through shock chlorination of a well or plumbing system produces a strong bleach (chlorine) odor. The bleach smell stops when chlorine

completely dissipates. This requires turning on outside faucets and letting the water run until the smell is gone.

In some cases, the added chlorine may interact with organic materials built up in the plumbing system and add odor to the water. The odor should disappear after running the water for a few minutes. If water is supplied by your own well and the problem appears to be in your plumbing and/or well systems, then your entire water system should be flushed, preferably by a licensed well driller or pump installer.

### **b. Rotten Eggs (Sulfurous), Decayed or Sewage-like Odor**

Generally, a rotten egg (or sulfurous), decayed or sewage-like odor in household water is a result of bacterial activity, which can be due to:

- Bacteria growing in the drain: This is the most common cause of these types of odors. Over time, organic matter such as hair, soap and food waste can accumulate on the walls of the drain. These deposits serve as a food for bacteria to grow. The bacteria can produce a gas that smells like rotten eggs or sewage. Address this problem by following these two steps:
  1. First, ensure that both the cold and hot water have the smell and that the smell is coming out of one or several faucets, but not all. Fill a glass with water from the sink that has the smell, then step away from the sink and swirl the water around inside the glass few times. If the problem is in the drain, the tap water in the glass should **not** have an odor.
  2. If the water in the glass does not smell, you should disinfect and flush the drain.
- Bacteria growing in the water heater: Bacteria growing in the water heater can also produce a rotten egg or sewage smell. Frequently, this occurs if the hot water is unused, if the water heater is turned off for a significant period of time or if the thermostat on the heater is set too low. Generally, the bacteria that produce this problem are not a health threat; however, the taste and odor can be very unpleasant. To address this problem, the following actions are suggested:
  1. Make sure that hot water smells, but cold water does not. Often, the smell originates from a magnesium heating rod in the hot water tank.
  2. If the heater has a magnesium rod, a licensed plumber can replace it with an acceptable alternative such as an aluminum rod.

### **c. Musty, Moldy, Earthy, Grassy or Fishy Odor**

Although these odors are harmless, the human senses of taste and smell are extremely sensitive even at a very low level. These kinds of odors may be due to:

- Decaying organic matter in the drain
- Pollution of well water from surface drainage

The presence of bacteria is very common in both cases. By far, the most common cause of this type of problem is the decaying organic matter deposited over time in the drain. To make sure the problem is not in the water, fill a glass with tap water, then step away from the sink and swirl the water around inside the glass few times. If the problem is in the drain, the tap water in the glass should not have an odor. Disinfecting, cleaning and flushing the drain should eliminate the odor.

#### **d. Petroleum, Gasoline, Turpentine, Fuel-like or Solvent-like Odor**

Even though these odor problems are rare, they are potentially serious.

Stop drinking the water because it may cause several adverse health consequences, including but not limited to:

1. Anemia
2. Increased risk of cancer
3. Liver and kidney problems

Remedial actions include:

1. Report the problem to Apple Valley Heights CWD [\(760\)247-7330](tel:7602477330).
2. Eliminate the source of the problem
3. Install an activated carbon filtration system after determining the type and source of the chemical contaminant